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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/...) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements* of the *Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

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2541st MEETING

Held in New York on Friday, 25 May 1984, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oleg A. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, Egypt, France, India, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2541/Rev.1)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Letter dated 21 May 1984 from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudia Arabia and the United Arab Emirates addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16574)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 21 May 1984 from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16574)

1. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Panama, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Sabah (Kuwait) and Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), took places at the Council table; Mr. Al-Sabbagh (Bahrain), Mr. Ali (Oman), Mr. Kam (Panama), Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar), Mr. Sarré (Senegal), Mr. Al-Musfir (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Sallam (Yemen) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter dated 24 May 1984 from the representatives of Kuwait [*S/16582*], which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request the Security Council to invite Mr. Chedli Klibi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council decides to grant the request made to it to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Chedli Klibi.

It was so decided.

3. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The Council is meeting today in response to a request contained in a letter dated 21 May 1984 from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the President of the Council [*S/16574*].

4. The first speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Information of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. I welcome him and invite him to make his statement.

5. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) [*interpretation from Arabic*]: Allow me, Mr. President, to convey my thanks to you and to the members of the Council for inviting me to speak before you on this important issue which is of great concern to us and to the international community. Given your well-known wisdom and high competence, as well as your great and friendly nation's support for our Arab causes, your guidance of our meeting today is a guarantee that we will achieve our objectives.

6. I should like to supply some details of Kuwait's complaint concerning Iran's attack on the Kuwaiti and Saudi tankers.

7. On 13 May this month, Iranian Air Force warplanes attacked the Kuwaiti tanker *Um Kassaba*. One day later another Kuwaiti tanker, the *Bahra*, was also subjected to attack. On 16 May, planes attacked the Saudi tanker, *Fakhr Yanbu*.

8. The details of the attack on the *Um Kassaba* are as follows. First, on 13 May, at 8 a.m., an Iranian reconnaissance plane was seen flying at a low altitude over the Kuwaiti tanker, which was moving at 27°43′, north latitude and at 50°10′, east longitude. Secondly, at 9.02 a.m., a Phantom jet fired three American-made missiles, two of which hit tank number three, while the third missile fell 30 to 40 metres away from the ship. The plane made another attack, firing an additional missile, which fell into the sea. Thirdly, a fire broke out as a result of the explosion of the missiles.

9. As for the details of the attack against the tanker *Bahra*, they are as follows: On 14 May, at 12.20 p.m., a reconnaissance plane was seen flying at a low altitude southward. The same plane returned at 2 p.m. and flew over the Kuwaiti tanker, which was moving at 27°42′, north latitude, and at 50°7′, east longitude. At exactly 4 p.m. the tanker was attacked, resulting in the injury of two crewmen. A crewman from the tanker was able to see the plane during the attack and recognized it as a Phantom F-4 jet. Several similarities between the attack on the tanker *Um Kassaba* and the attack on the tanker *Bahra* have been ascertained by us. Those similarities are as follows: the location of each of the tankers during the attack, the sighting of a reconnaissance plane flying around the location of the two tankers before the attacks and the use of the same type of missiles in the attacks. Furthermore, it was definitely confirmed that the missiles used in the two incidents were American-made missiles, four of which can be carried by an American F-4 jet.

10. Members of the Council have undoubtedly followed those acts of aggression and are aware of all the casualties and material damage that resulted therefrom, as well as of world reaction to those acts committed against the interests of two countries which are not parties to the Iran-Iraq war. Since that war broke out, Kuwait has been involved in concerted efforts to stop the fighting between those two Muslim neighbours. These acts of aggression constitute an extension of the evils of that war and have grave and dangerous implications for the stability and security of the region. They also jeopardize the interests of a great number of nations. The continuation of this war for the past four years has undoubtedly had an adverse effect on the Gulf region, in particular, and the Middle East in general.

11. From the beginning of war, Kuwait, together with brothers and friends, and through regional and international organizations, has sought to stop this grinding war by all means. We have spared no effort with our brothers in the Gulf Co-operation Council. Together with my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, last year I personally went on a mission to Tehran, where we met with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other top officials. Then we pursued our mission at Baghdad. We also worked within the framework of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We invited the great Powers to make further efforts in the interest of world peace and security. We called upon the United Nations to move promptly and to give this cause attention commensurate with the gravity of the situation. More than once we appealed to the two parties to put an end to the bleeding that has exhausted vast human and material resources in the two countries.

12. It is no secret that our friendly and neighbourly relations with the warring parties and our eagerness to maintain those relations have always prompted us to make painstaking efforts to stop the war. In spite of all these unfortunate events, my country's faith in world peace and the pursuit thereof by all means at hand will remain unshakeable until peace, stability and normalcy return to that vital region of the world.

13. Unfortunately, not only have all those efforts met with a lack of response on the part of Iran, but Iran also has attacked our tankers on the high seas outside the area of military operations declared by the two warring parties. My Government forthwith protested to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and held consultations with the fraternal countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council, whose Board of Ministers held an emergency meeting at which it was decided to present this case to the Council of the League of Arab States and the Security Council.

14. When the case was taken up by the Council of the League of Arab States on 19 May, the Council condemned the Iranian acts of aggression against the Kuwaiti and Saudi tankers and called upon Iran, first, to desist from attacking ships sailing to and from the seaports of the countries of the Co-operation Council; secondly, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries and their waterways, ports and economic installations; and, thirdly, to comply with the duties arising from good-neighbourliness and the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions. The Council also adopted a resolution calling upon the Security Council and the international community to take firm action to put an end to such aggression in view of its potential in destabilizing the security and stability of the Gulf region and endangering the legitimate interests of the countries of the region and the world.

15. The policy of Kuwait and the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council has been characterized by maintenance of the Gulf region as a zone of peace and stability in view of the Gulf's particular strategic, economic and political importance, as a result of which any disorder will have a crucial impact on international relations and the world economic situation, and, particularly, active participation in bilateral, regional and international development programmes.

16. In pursuance thereof, Kuwait and the countries of the Co-operation Council have laid down basic principles in their policies and practices, the most important of which are the following: the principles of self-re-

liance in order to maintain their independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and vital interests; the principle that the maintenance of peace and stability in the region are the responsibility of its countries and not of any party outside the region; the principle of adhering to the policy of non-alignment based on rejection of the policy of axes, polarization and the race among the great Powers for spheres of influence.

17. The attacks are in violation of existing international conventions according to which the high seas are open to all countries, and no country is allowed to put any part thereof under its sovereignty. This has been international custom; it was codified by the Convention on the High Seas of 1958,[1] which puts freedom of navigation first among the freedoms that are, according to that Convention, to be enjoyed by all countries. This principle has also been confirmed by several other regional and international agreements, the latest of which is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982.[2] The Kuwait Regional Convention of 1978 and its Protocol[3] concluded by the countries of the Gulf, including Iran, also contain provisions that govern the commitment to protect the maritime area in the Gulf from pollution and to protect the coasts and relevant interests of member States.

18. The Iranian acts of aggression are in violation of all those agreements. They also constitute a clear-cut violation of the *bona fide* principle, considered one of the main rules of international custom, that makes it imperative that all countries fulfil their contractual commitments in good faith. In the Holy Koran, God Almighty says, "O ye who believe! Fulfil all obligations."[4] The Almighty also says, "and fulfil every engagement, for every engagement will be inquired into".[5]

19. These Iranian attacks that the Council is discussing come in fulfilment of provocative threats we have often bypassed in the hope of containing the situation and once and for all putting an end to the conflict threatening the entire region with destruction and devastation. Unfortunately, however, it must be observed that this step will undoubtedly be followed by other steps that will escalate the existing volatile situation. This can be ascertained from what has repeatedly been said by the leaders of Iran concerning their insistence and determination in continuing to repeat the aggression. This should be clear from Iran's attack yesterday on another tanker sailing the same navigational route, which is far away from the area of military operations. The aggressive behaviour on the part of Iran is aimed, *inter alia*, at inducing certain Powers with known objectives and interests to become parties to the dispute. We are trying to avoid that in order to avert more complicated dangers that might in turn lead to a direct confrontation between several Powers at the expense of the independence of our countries and the interests of our peoples.

20. These apprehensions confirm the gravity of the situation in which we find ourselves and which calls upon us to move quickly to stop the hostilities. My Government would like to draw the attention of the Council, in accordance with Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, to the volatile situation resulting from the unjustified attack by Iranian fighter-planes against our tankers in the Gulf region, a situation which not only constitutes a grave expansion of the war existing in the region, but also threatens the peace and security of the entire world. We therefore call upon the Council to exercise its legal jurisdiction as provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter.

21. The State of Kuwait, while exercising the maximum degree of self-restraint, hopes to see a halt to these illegal attacks against our tankers, and a guarantee of the freedom of navigation in the Gulf region, in the interest of all countries of the region and the entire world. At the same time, Kuwait reserves its right, in the event of a recurrence of such acts of aggression and illegal practices, to call upon the Council to adopt the appropriate resolutions and measures as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter. We call upon the Council, whose responsibility it is to maintain international peace and security, to assume its responsibilities.

22. One of the things that prompted us to resort to the Council was our desire to acquaint the international community, through the Council, of the dangers involved in the continued Iranian acts of aggression against world peace and security. When we repeatedly state that these acts of aggression constitute a threat to international peace and security, we say so because we are completely convinced of it. The political and economic nature of the Gulf region, as well as its sensitive situation, both strategically and in terms of security, makes it imperative that the Gulf become an oasis of peace and security. If the region is exposed to turbulence and chaos, its tranquillity disturbed by acts of aggression, and its freedom of navigation to and from countries not parties to the dispute impeded, then the interests of the entire world will be affected; the movement and growth of the world economy will be dealt a great set-back. Any change in the balance of political power in the region will have adverse effects on international interests, which may lead to unpredictable consequences for the entire region.

23. We in the Gulf Co-operation Council insist on, and persist in, trying to keep our area free of foreign interference. We therefore demand a halt to Iranian attacks against ships proceeding to and from our ports. Otherwise, our region will not be immune from foreign interference, which will bring disaster to all.

24. It was with that in mind that we came to the Security Council, particularly since the countries of the Co-operation Council attach special importance to compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

25. In our international relations, we have complied with those principles. Indeed, our international con-

duct, particularly in the United Nations—whose role in and importance to the cause of world peace and security we applaud—has been characterized by commitment to the Organization and its resolutions. There is no doubt that this commitment has lent credibility to our international conduct and our foreign relations. The most eloquent evidence of our faith in diplomacy and dialogue is our recourse to the Security Council to apprise it of threats to our peace and security.

26. We come here not out of weakness or fear, but rather out of faith in the need to settle international disputes in accordance with the principles embodied in the Charter—by methods that will obviate the resort to force, with all its devastating effects on national construction, which we developing nations need so badly in order to fulfil the aspirations of our peoples for a better future. Our appearance here is in itself an assertion of our desire to keep conflicts away from our region and to provide ways and means of preventing the devastating war that will surely strike the region if it is not seriously and responsibly prevented by the world at large.

27. While calling upon the Council to adopt a fair resolution that will identify the aggressor, condemn the aggression and warn against its recurrence, we assert our eagerness to continue exercising self-restraint and to exert every possible effort, together with all the other parties, including Iran, to restore peace and stability to the region and its peoples so that we can all contribute to the establishment of a world where peace and security prevail.

28. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani. I welcome him and invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

29. Mr. AL-THANI (Qatar) [*interpretation from Arabic*]: Mr. President, I wish, first of all, to thank you for having responded so diligently to the requests of States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council to convene an urgent meeting of the Security Council in order to consider Iranian acts of aggression against tankers proceeding to and from the ports of those States.

30. The Council is aware of the Gulf region's extreme importance to the entire world economy and civilization. Qatar and fraternal countries members of the Gulf Co-operation Council have always stressed the need to transform the Gulf region into a zone of peace and security, especially since this is an objective closely related to the peace and security of the world at large.

31. Out of our concern to guarantee regional and international peace and security, the Arab States of the Gulf have taken every possible opportunity to strengthen the peace and stability of the region. We are deeply convinced that the persistence of tension and its repercussions can lead to the intervention of other parties in the conflict.

32. The Council is not unaware that, from 13 to 18 May, Iran attacked Kuwaiti and Saudi tankers outside the war zone. Just yesterday another Saudi ship was attacked. This is something which can bring the countries of the region unwillingly into a military situation and can seriously endanger international peace and security.

33. States of the Gulf Co-operation Council denounce this flagrant and unjustified aggression by the Islamic Republic of Iran and call upon it to respect the principle of good-neighbourliness and international conventions.

34. The widening of the theatre of war simply means a loss in human and economic resources, a halt to the development process and the intensification of human suffering, while the Gulf region is pushed into an international conflict as a result of the geopolitical situation of the countries there and the vital importance of that region to the States of the world. This Iranian aggression not only affects the vital interests of the Gulf States but also poses a very serious threat to international peace and security because of the importance of the region to the entire world.

35. The Council has a historic responsibility before it: to prevent aggression against States not parties to the conflict and to ensure the freedom of trade and navigation in international waters in accordance with the conventions and international agreements of the United Nations. Respect for the territorial integrity of States is an obligation guaranteed by the Charter. Therefore Iran must be dissuaded from continuing its acts of aggression against our States and this task must be discharged by the Council. My Government requests the Council to adopt the draft resolution upon which consultations have taken place.

36. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to make his statement.

37. Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) [*interpretation from Arabic*]: Sir, it gives me pleasure at the outset to extend my congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Your fine qualities, wide experience, good judgement and competence, which I know so well, will surely contribute to the success of our discussions and to our arrival at a satisfactory conclusion. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to your predecessor in the presidency of the Council, Mr. Kravets, the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, for his competence and efficiency in conducting the proceedings of the Council last month.

38. The international role best played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is its role in support of regional and global peace and security; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia dedicates all its efforts and capabilities towards a just, peaceful and stable world where close and distant neighbours alike would be a source of well-being and

security as well as of stability and peace. This has always been and continues to be our premise in the Kingdom. Adventurers in the past who misunderstood this political and moral attitude as an indication of softness have been made to regret their actions.

39. The last thing that we desired was to come here in the role of a complainant asking to deter a neighbour or to address an aggressor. The whole world knows that our efforts in the international community have always been aimed at saving others from harm and at applying the principles of law and justice in bilateral and international relations. This pertains especially to our relations with our neighbours, with which we have ties of religion, history and close interests.

40. Iran, in particular, is an Islamic State and a close neighbour with which we have shared long periods of common history. We have always endeavoured to co-operate with Iran on the basis of warm feeling for its people, not fear of them. Since the establishment of the present régime in Iran, we have made every effort to strengthen our relationship with it. We have also made every effort, unilaterally and collectively, through the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations, to put an end to the Iran-Iraq war and to stop the shedding of blood by the two neighbouring Islamic nations.

41. Following Iran's complaint that civilian targets there had been attacked by Iraq, the Gulf Co-operation Council launched an initiative in which Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, who is now present with us, played an effective role. That initiative was designed to protect the Gulf's vital installations and interests, to prevent attacks upon civilians in both Iraq and Iran, to neutralize the Gulf, including its waters, harbours and installations, and to put an end to the Iran-Iraq war. Regrettably, however, Iran rejected these efforts and arrogated to itself the right to attack ships of third parties and to infringe on the sovereignty of the Kingdom.

42. We appreciate the difficult circumstances that the Iranian people have faced over the past few years; we have patiently watched its lack of perception and appreciation of our efforts. But some of those responsible in Iran have misunderstood the Kingdom's stand and have failed to appreciate our determination to curtail and deter any aggression, while we are striving at the same time for the establishment and maintenance of peace. They have done a disservice to themselves, to their country, to the region and, in fact, to the whole world.

43. We were surprised at the extent of Iran's misconception of the situation recently when Iranian military planes, whose identity was confirmed by Saudi detection equipment, attacked Saudi and Kuwaiti tankers inside Saudi territorial waters and adjacent navigational waterways remote from the area of military operations. This was a calculated and intentional attack threatening navigation to and from the Kingdom and to the sister Arab countries of the Gulf, as well as to the outside world. Following this unwarranted attack, responsible Iranian officials declared what is tantamount to their determination to take revenge for what they have suffered in their war with Iraq. They began with the Gulf countries in order to intimidate countries that have trade relations with the Gulf into suspending their international trade. They attempted to achieve their objective with the attack on Saudi and Kuwaiti ships in territorial waters.

44. Can the world permit Iran to carry its aggression into third countries—countries not in a state of war with it? Should Iran not be firmly and decisively condemned by the Council for such unjustified aggression? Indeed, given the economic and political stakes that all countries, near or far, have in the Gulf, how can the world ignore Iran's commission of aggression against the Gulf States in order to take revenge against Iraq? To accept such logic is to open the door to international irresponsibility, to undermine the basic principles and values of the United Nations and destroy all that civilizations have achieved since mankind has progressed from the law of the jungle to the present concept of the United Nations.

45. This unwarranted armed aggression, this surprise attack by Iran against ships of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait in our territorial waters and adjacent navigational waterways constitutes a destructive threat not only to the interests of the Kingdom and those of the State of Kuwait but also to world interests, a threat endangering every one of us to a greater or lesser extent. We are not at war with Iran, but its military planes have attacked our ships inside our territorial waters. The malicious intent is clear: it is to disrupt the role of the Gulf States as a constructive regional and world force. We and the other responsible countries of the world have no alternative but to declare a clear and forthright position in the face of irresponsible adventures which cannot be allowed to continue.

46. The importance and the vital nature of the Gulf lie in the fact that, in addition to being an extension of the territorial waters of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the other States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, it is one of the most sensitive regions in the world, where the interaction between political and economic factors affects the vital interests of a large number of countries in the four corners of the globe as well as the full range of international economic and political activities. In fact, any complications there will in equal measure affect the developing and industrialized countries alike.

47. We, the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, will spare no effort in preserving the Gulf as a region of stability no matter what that might cost. But the other responsible countries of the world must support our position of deterring any party that entertains

the idea of disturbing this stability. All countries and peoples, however much their political systems may differ, have a clear interest in supporting our efforts to curb irresponsibility in the Gulf. The aggression against States outside the Iran-Iraq war zone is the most dangerous phenomenon we have seen in the development of the present war, which, together with the members of the Council, we are trying here to curtail and to end. It is unilateral aggression against countries which are not at war.

48. Consultations have taken place on a draft resolution we are presenting after a balanced examination of all the pertinent circumstances. We believe that the most important and vital of those considerations concerns the need for the Council to express firmly its determination not to permit any aggression against third parties in the Gulf region that are not participating in the war. The international community must not hesitate to declare its position. If the present attitude of Iran is permitted to prevail, the international community will suffer much greater and much more dangerous consequences than would have been the case had it taken a firm and clearly pronounced position here and now.

49. Such a firm stand would make the Iranians in positions of responsibility hear the voice that today is echoing in the corridors of world politics deploring the Iranian aggression against its non-belligerent neighbours, aggression which is threatening the stability of the Gulf. Keeping that voice restrained within those corridors and unheard in Iran will only further feed Iran's delusion that it can continue with its aggression against whomsoever it desires. If that voice remains subdued until the situation deteriorates further, the world will pay an exhorbitant price for its failure to express to the Iranian authorities its true stance at the right time.

50. The Security Council bears a fundamental responsibility for crystallizing that firm position. In fact, it bears the primary responsibility in that regard on behalf of the international community. The time when that responsibility will have to be faced will inevitably come if irresponsible behaviour continues. The Council is now called upon to take a firm stand with regard to the Iranian aggression against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait. This is a matter that is independent of the Iraq-Iran war, which we are all endeavouring to end. The Council must adopt measures that will stop all acts of aggression against third States which are not parties to the war.

51. We and the whole world reject Iran's contention that it has the right to attack targets in a country that has relations with Iraq and to bomb ships that are proceeding to and from the ports of the countries members of the Gulf Co-operation Council as retaliation for any attack by Iraq on Iranian targets. It is well known to all that Iran is the party that has destroyed Iraqi ports. It is a dangerous principle for a country at war with another to arrogate to itself the right to attack a third party. In fact, this could be one of the most dangerous principles affecting international relations and peace and security everywhere, unless it is condemned and rejected by the international community.

52. I wish to conclude my statement by appealing to all the members of the Council to take a clear and categorical position in accordance with the Charter, to which they are committed and for whose implementation they are responsible, and taking due account of all the considerations I have mentioned in respect of Iran's unwarranted aggression against countries that are not parties to the armed conflict. This should be a clear position consistent with the responsible roles played by Council members in the international community.

53. I should like finally to reaffirm here that our determination to protect our interests and our sovereignty is unequivocal and is equal to our determination to ensure that this irresponsible Iranian action will not impede our efforts to establish lasting peace and stability in the Gulf region.

54. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

55. Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) [*interpretation from Arabic*]: Permit me, Sir, to tell you how pleased we are to see you, an individual well known for his wisdom, far-sightedness and broad political and diplomatic experience, presiding over the work of the Security Council. You represent a country with which Yemen has for more than 50 years maintained ties of solid friendship based on mutual esteem and respect. The question before the Council is an important one, and I am certain that its deliberations will be successful, thanks to the presidency of a man of your eminence.

56. I should like to express, through you, Mr. President, the thanks and appreciation of the delegation of the Yemen Arab Republic to the members of the Council for having allowed my delegation to participate in the Council's deliberations on the agenda item.

57. It is a pleasure for me as well to express my delegation's appreciation for the very commendable efforts made by your predecessor, Mr. Kravets, representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, who guided the Council's work last month.

58. The Ministers and representatives of the States of Kuwait, Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have preceded me in providing details on the issue now before the Council. Basing itself on the principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations, the most important of which is the commitment of Member States in international relations to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of other States, the delega-

tion of Yemen considers that the acts of aggression committed by Iranian aircraft against Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti tankers in territorial waters and international navigation channels, far from areas that have been declared as zones of hostility, should be denounced and their persistence condemned, since they are aimed against tankers belonging to two States that are not party to the conflict—something which heightens tension in the region and constitutes a new threat to the peace, security and stability of those States and of the world at large.

59. We are deeply distressed at the tragedy being experienced by the peoples of fraternal Iraq and the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran because of this long war that has devastated the economies of the two States and taken a toll of tens of thousands of men, women and children.

60. The war between Iran and Iraq is now being extended beyond the borders of the two belligerent States, due to the failure of the Council to do its duty and to assume its responsibilities towards impartially restoring international peace and security in a serious and sincere manner, in accordance with the principles of the Charter. The Council is today more than ever duty-bound to work collectively to halt this pointless war between two States with which my country has religious and fraternal ties and shares a civilization and traditions dating back to ancient times.

61. On behalf of the Government of Yemen, I appeal, through you, Mr. President, to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to put an end to the fighting, to restore peace and to respond to the impartial and neutral mediation efforts of the Secretary-General, as well as accept mediation by the Security Council, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and neutral friendly countries, so that guns and cannon may be replaced by dialogue at the negotiating table.

62. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

63. Mr. SARRÉ (Senegal) [*interpretation from French*]: Mr. President, I already had occasion last week to tell you how highly my delegation valued the talent with which you were guiding the work of the Council. This talent will be greatly needed throughout the month of May, since this seems to be a particularly busy month for the Council.

64. My country has asked to take part in this debate for three reasons: it considers, first of all, that the United Nations is the best forum for the settlement by peaceful means of disputes breaking out between States; secondly, it fears that the situation in the Gulf region has worsened and this could have deleterious effects on the economic and political development of the States of the world, especially for the countries of the third world; thirdly, it is convinced that the Security Council, as the guarantor of world peace and security, can take decisive measures to foster peace, understanding and harmony in this part of the world.

65. The situation that has given rise to this new series of meetings of the Council undoubtedly has serious implications for international peace and security. The remarkable statements made by the representatives of Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia show to what extent we are inexorably moving towards a situation with unpredictable consequences. Indeed, threats to free navigation in the waters of the Gulf show that, if we are not careful, overnight all the countries represented in this chamber could be confronted with difficulties that could lead to economic and even political instability.

66. In our opinion, the present situation should be viewed in the wider context of the conflict that has raged in this region for almost four years. Indeed, for four years now, the fratricidal conflict between Iran and Iraq has been added to a situation which for a long time has made the Middle East potentially one of the most dangerous regions threatening international peace and security. For four years this conflict has cost the lives of thousands of innocent men, women and children and inflicted terrible suffering upon a great many people on both sides. Aside from the squandering of precious human and material resources of two fraternal countries, this conflict represents a threat to the stability of the whole region and contains the seeds of an eventual explosion of unpredictable scope.

67. As far as we are concerned, our membership of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference precludes our remaining indifferent to this painful problem which is a constant source of concern to my country.

68. Today, the scope of the damage already caused and the danger of other States of the region becoming engulfed in the hostilities pose a challenge to the conscience of the international community, which can ill afford to stand idly by in the face of this dangerous conflict. As stressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal during the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly:

> "The international community has no choice today but to persevere in and strengthen the efforts already undertaken under various auspices to persuade the two parties to negotiate a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement."

Senegal, as a member of the Good Offices Committee of the Islamic Countries, created at Taif in January 1981 by the Third Islamic Summit Conference, intends, together with other countries members of that Committee, to pursue its efforts in order to establish peace and understanding between these two fraternal countries.

69. Peace in the Gulf has already produced courageous and praiseworthy initiatives under various auspices, such as those of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as the Council was just reminded by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait. It is here in the United Nations, however, that the main task must be performed, and the present meeting of the Security Council does, indeed, reflect the deep concern felt by the overwhelming majority of the Member States over the continuation of this conflict and the new threat it poses to the security of the region.

70. Since the beginning of this conflict the Council has adopted four resolutions and approved five presidential statements, all aimed at requesting both parties to abide by the cease-fire and settle their disputes by peaceful means. None of these resolutions, unfortunately, has produced any tangible results so far. Indeed, the magnitude of the difficulties is such that it rendered virtually nugatory the efforts of the Council. This is particularly regrettable, since, in our opinion, there is no fundamental clash of interests between those two third-world Islamic countries. Moreover, because of this war inestimable human and material resources have been diverted from other burning problems which the region has been confronting for over 40 years.

71. Therefore, this ongoing conflict in no way serves the true interests of the Iranian and Iraqi peoples, nor is it consonant with the legitimate aspirations of the other States of the region which suffer unjustly from the consequences of this war through the repeated and wilful destruction of their infrastructure or their economic logistics. There is no need to repeat what was most aptly said by the other speakers this morning.

72. Furthermore, neither time nor lack of progress should allow us to slacken in our efforts to foster a just and equitable settlement of this fratricidal conflict. The Council will have to persevere in its efforts to ensure the negotiation of the concrete and positive aspects of a settlement on the bases of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law and the mutual interests of the parties to the conflict.

73. Over and above the substance of the conflict, the fact is that Iran and Iraq are located in a particularly sensitive area of the world. One need not be an alarmist to warn that the risks of an explosion that could entail a wider conflict increase from day to day. Indeed, with the dangers confronting the freedom of navigation in the waters of the Gulf, the internationalization of the conflict seems more than probable. Indeed, in the interests of their independence and very survival, the States of the region—in particular Iran and Iraq themselves—should not lose sight of the gravity of the situation.

74. This is why my country expects the following from these meetings of the Council: first, a call for the elimination of all obstacles to the freedom of navigation in the international waters of the Gulf, pursuant to the Convention on the High Seas of 1958[1] and the agreements among the States of the region, the importance of which has just been stressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait; secondly, a renewed call for the cessation of hostilities and the continuation of mediation efforts; thirdly, reaffirmation of the appeal addressed to the belligerents that they respect the territorial integrity and economic infrastructures of the other coastal States, with stress upon the need for all States to refrain from any action likely to worsen or widen the conflict.

75. The restoration of peace and stability in one of the most sensitive areas of the world remains a noble, albeit difficult, objective to achieve. To succeed, we must have the political will, as well as patience and determination, to induce both parties to move towards real peace. For four years the use of force has not succeeded in solving this fratricidal conflict. We must therefore conclude that no strategy based on force will bring about peace in that troubled part of the world. In this connection, my delegation would like to take this occasion to pay a tribute to the declared intention of the parties directly concerned—Kuwait and Saudi Arabia—to refrain from the use of force and do their best to ensure freedom of navigation in the region. We are happy to note that the previous speakers have solemnly proclaimed that they will refrain from any reprisals for the destruction of their countries' economic and political infrastructures.

76. We express the hope that both parties, in the light of all the statements heard this morning, will understand that there is no choice but dialogue and negotiation in order to promote a just and lasting peace in their part of the world.

77. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Chedli Klibi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

78. Mr. KLIBI [*interpretation from Arabic*]: Mr. President, it is a pleasure for me, first of all, to congratulate you most warmly and to say how pleased we are to see you presiding over the Council, given your recognized experience and competence, the role the Soviet Union, the country you so ably represent, plays in the world, and the responsibilities assumed by your country in the cause of international peace and security.

79. The League of Arab States has given considerable support to the cause of co-operation with the United Nations. It regards as one of its basic tasks the strengthening of the organs of the United Nations system at all levels and it wishes to ensure that the international community respect and heed its decisions. Therefore our participation in the deliberations of the Council should be regarded as an expression of our dedication

to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and our resolve to contribute to the implementation of the decisions of the international Organization and to their effectiveness.

80. The question that has been brought before the Council today involves a situation threatening international security. It is a question which must be dealt with expeditiously and firmly, in order to prevent a heightening of the danger in an extremely troubled region of the world. Navigation in the international waters of the Gulf has in fact been the object of acts of aggression by the Iranian Air Force, which has attacked tankers belonging to two Arab States on the Gulf, Members of the United Nations, that is, Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It cannot be denied that those ships were in no way military; they were not participating in the war; they were outside the combat zone; they were not armed; and they did not carry any war *matériel*. They were commercial vessels with the right of innocent passage in territorial waters, in accordance with international law. Iran was well aware of all that when it decided to attack those tankers one after another. Therefore those acts, for which Iran is responsible, are acts of aggression against the sovereignty, security and integrity of the territorial waters of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in violation of the norms of good-neighbourliness, the Charter and the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

81. While the Gulf States have throughout the course of that war—which has now lasted almost four years—preserved bonds of good-neighbourliness with Iran, the aggression perpetrated by that country endangers peace and brings about a dangerous turn to the armed conflict by introducing a new factor of tension in addition to those already existing in the region. Thus Iran has attempted to thwart the persevering fraternal efforts made by the Gulf States and the other Arab States to put an end to the war and restore peace and harmony to the region.

82. Perhaps the greatest threat posed by this new development, which may continue and widen, resides in the halting of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, something which not only would make it difficult to meet the world's oil needs but might also curb the economic activities of certain countries, paralyse the economies of others and lead to a considerable increase in the price of oil, thereby dealing a severe blow to the world economy that could not be withstood by many countries. Members of the Council are certainly aware that such a development, *inter alia*, could internationalize the conflict. They are also aware of what a direct threat to international peace and security that behaviour and its effects would represent.

83. The recent Iranian acts of aggression against international navigation in the Gulf which are now under consideration in the Council constitute one of the consequences of the continuation of the war between Iraq and Iran. The League of Arab States has, on the basis of its international responsibilities and pursuant to the articles of its charter, always hastened to support the resolutions of the Security Council. It has also at all times given its support to steps taken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Iraq, a founding member of the League, has declared its compliance with the resolutions of the Council, especially resolution 540 (1983), just as it has welcomed the various initiatives taken to put an end to the war, guaranteeing the legitimate rights of both parties and the relations of co-operation, friendship and harmony that should exist on a basis of good-neighbourliness and other ties between the two countries. These steps have not so far achieved the desired results, because the Iranian Government has rejected them and this has led to an escalation of the danger and a widening of the conflict.

84. For all these reasons, the Gulf Co-operation Council decided to bring the question to the Security Council, armed with a resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at the conclusion of a special session held on 19 May last at Tunis. In that resolution, the Council of the League, after having condemned that serious aggression as one which could have the widest repercussions on the stability and security of the region, first of all, called upon Iran to refrain from any further aggression against navigation in the region and against the ports of the States of the Gulf Council of Co-operation and to respect the territorial integrity, sea lanes, ports and infrastructures used for the economic activities of those States and to pledge also to respect the norms of good-neighbourliness, the principles of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations, especially Security Council resolution 540 (1983); secondly, it appealed to the Security Council and the international community to adopt a firm and clear position in order to stem the dangers inherent in the recurrence of such acts of aggression, which could disturb the security and stability of the Gulf region and threaten the legitimate interests of the countries of the region and the world at large.

85. The fact that the Arab States are turning to the Security Council means that in this case, just as in all others, they are complying with international law as laid down in the United Nations itself and its organs, whose task it is to ensure the security and peace of all the regions of the world.

86. In this regard, I should like to place a few thoughts before the Council: first of all, our assessment of the crisis that is worsening in the Gulf region is predicated upon our fervent wish to put an end to the war and to prevent the widening of present confrontations, a widening that would be fraught with dangers to international peace and security; secondly, the recent escalation tends to add a new dimension to the conflict through a blockading of the ports of States that are not parties to the conflict. Under international law this is considered a *casus belli*; thirdly, if acts of aggression

against navigation were to increase, maritime traffic in the Gulf would be disturbed to such an extent that the situation could lead to foreign intervention—above all, by the big Powers; fourthly and lastly, a widening of the area of conflict would be tantamount to inviting the big Powers to intervene in the region, and this would certainly not be in the interest of any State of the region.

87. The Gulf region has a highly important strategic location, and this should prompt the international community to preserve it from danger and guarantee its security and stability by assuming the collective responsibility to contain the conflict as much as possible, until such time as it can be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In that way the danger of a possible internationalization of the conflict, which would precipitate the region into the torments of a deadly, generalized war, would be eliminated. Hence, the responsibility for restoring the stability and security of that troubled region is an international one, which must be assumed by the international community, and in particular the Security Council, which the Charter has entrusted with the task of preserving world peace and security.

88. The Arab States, aware that the dangers of war in the Gulf would not be confined to Iraq and Iran but, rather, if the conflict widened, would lead to repercussions for many States of the world, appeal for a peace settlement, and are making every effort and devoting all their energy to that purpose.

89. Since Iraq has welcomed the steps taken at the regional and international levels and has complied with international legality, while Iran has persisted in its continuation of war, all efforts should be made to prompt Iran to heed the will of the international community, represented by the Security Council and expressed in its resolutions, and to heed appeals for peace and accept that an immediate end should be put to the war. That would stop the shedding of blood and lead to a negotiated settlement based on justice, so that normal relations between the two neighbouring States could be resumed with a view to establishing harmony and co-operation for development and progress.

90. The fact that a ministerial delegation representing the Council of the League of Arab States has addressed itself to the Security Council on the question of free navigation in the Gulf demonstrates the sincere will of our States to spare the world in general and the region in particular the risks of an aggravation of the crisis. It is also a demonstration of our persevering work to contain the crisis and lead the way to a settlement through political and peaceful means.

91. The League of Arab States hopes that the Security Council will not confine itself to expressing its concern over the freedom and security of navigation in the Gulf, but will take the measures it deems appropriate to protect navigation in the region and to ensure the safety of the international sea lanes and channels, until the Council can put an end to the war and bring about a solution to the conflict between Iran and Iraq.

92. This is imperative, in the interests of all nations. It is a desire shared by all States, large and small, in view of the interdependence of States and their common interest in the world economy, production, economic exchanges and security and stability in that region, which is strategically so important.

93. The Security Council should in clear terms inform Iran that it cannot continue to benefit from the advantages of the international economic order while persisting in violating law and defying the will of the international community. At the same time, we remind Iran of the spiritual and religious links between the Arab nation and the Iranian nation, the glorious accomplishments of those two nations in the course of centuries to build Islamic civilization, as well as the co-operation that should be developed by Iran, in view of its membership of the Muslim world and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, together with the Arab States, in particular Iraq. We also remind Iran that a just and honourable peace settlement is within its reach, that if it commits itself to that solution, as Iraq has, it will in an atmosphere of fraternity and co-operation find a way to save human lives, to restore legitimate rights and rebuild what war has destroyed.

94. The United Nations was established to protect present and future generations from the scourge of war, from which mankind has long suffered. My presence before the Council as the representative of an international and regional organization is confirmation of the fact that the League of Arab States is committed to the defence of international peace and security, in co-operation with the United Nations, and will bring all conflicts to its bodies, and in the first instance, to the Security Council.

95. We are convinced that the Council will act within its powers, so that international law may prevail, for the benefit of peace and security, based on justice.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

NOTES

[1] See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 450, No. 6465.

[2] *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. XVII, document A/CONF.62/122.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1140, No. 17898.

[4] See V, 1.

[5] See XVII, 34.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 22nd meeting, para. 222.

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